

H O B B Y

# Bandwagon

Vol. 5—NOVEMBER and DECEMBER, 1950

15c



—Photo by Leslie B. Ulrich

**MISS GAIL DE RIZKIE**



HOBBY

## Bandwagon

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Owner, publisher, editor and manager,  
Harry M. Simpson, Camden, Ohio.  
Mortgagee: None.

HARRY M. SIMPSON  
Publisher

Subscribed and sworn before me this  
25th day of September, 1950.

LOUISE SIMPSON,  
Notary Public.

## The Editor Says



You will have to excuse us for  
this make-shift issue of the Band-  
wagon. Besides the Holiday  
Season rush in newspaper and  
job printing work, many obstacles  
caused delays which made it nec-  
essary to publish this issue in a  
hurry.

My thanks to the many who  
complimented the last issue. It  
was only a sample of what the  
new Bandwagon Staff is capable  
of producing.

This holiday number brings to  
a close another year and with it  
many fond memories of the de-  
lightful circus season we have all  
enjoyed. Thanks to all for their  
fine cooperation during the past  
year, especially to Bob King, who  
has done a grand job printing  
and assisting the publication of  
this magazine.

A Merry Christmas and a  
Happy New Circus Year to all.

HARRY M. SIMPSON

### MANY THANKS

I wish to extend my sincere  
thanks for the cards, letters  
and flowers received from C.  
H. S. members and friends of  
the Circus, during the loss of  
my father.

HARRY M. SIMPSON

# A Tour of Canada With The Mighty Haag Circus, Season 1912

Written for The Bandwagon by Charlie Duble

A long tour of Canada was made by the MIGHTY HAAG CIRCUS season of 1912, this show entering Ontario, June 3 at Port Colborne. St. Catherines, Galt, Stratford, Listowel, Owen Sound, Hanover, Guelph, Barrie, Midland, Bracebridge, and Burk's Falls were played up to June 15. A run of 325 miles was made to South Corcupine, Ontario, on the T. N. O. Railway for June 17. The show was unloaded and on the lot by noon Sunday. This town is in the silver-mining district and one dollar was the admission to the big show at that stand. It was a cloudy and cool day and business was not what was expected. Following this date came Englehardt, North Cobalt, Sturgeon Falls, Sudbury, Parry Sound, Orillia, Lindsay, Port Hope, Brighton, Wellington, Napanee, Brookville, and Cornwall up to July 3. The show with its good parade, featuring some elegant tableau wagons and its pleasing performance had made a pronounced hit. The first stand in Quebec was Valleyfield on July 4. Fine business at this city. The French-Canadians were more than pleased. St. Remi, St. Hyacinthe, Victoriaville, and Levis, the last named just opposite the city of Quebec were played up to July 9. Many of the show folks, including the writer made a trip by ferry early that morning to see this quaint old city. Montmagny, Saint Anne, Rivere Du Loup, and Rimouski, on the upper St. Lawrence river and amid beautiful scenery were played up to July 13.

The show made its first stand in New Brunswick at Campellton on July 15, followed by Bathurst, New Castle and Petitcodiac, then into Nova Scotia at Truro. Kentville, and Windsor followed. Because of high winds and stormy weather only the cook tent and horse tents were erected and no performances given at Windsor. Halifax, New Glasgow, Oxford and Dorchester, N. S., were the next cities. On July 18 the wagons and all people were transported from Point Du Chene, N. S., by steamer across Northumberland Strait, a three hour trip, landing at Summerside that afternoon. This town is on Prince Edward Island. Narrow gauge railroads were in use on the Island at that time, hence the show train was left at Point Du Chene. No parade wagons were taken over as no parades were given that week. Ordinary railway cars had been arranged for well in advance by General Agent George Moyer for movement that week, about 28 cars being used. Performances were given Monday at Summerside to very good business then Alberton, followed by a two day stand at Charlottetown which was the largest city, 16,000 population.

Montague, and Souris, finished the week. All moved back to Point Du Chene on Sunday, show train reloaded and tour continued. An unfortunate happening occurred to a Mr. Carroll who was scratched on the arm by a lion a few days before, and he died from the effects of this later if I am not mistaken. He was a scenic painter having done much of the artistic work on circus wagons. Moncton,



## A Tour of Canada (cont'd)

N. B., was played August 5, and Chatham, Doacktown, and Fredericton were the stands up to August 9. Big crowds at Fredericton. Another stormy day at Bristol, August 10, caused the show to lose this stand.

Edmundston, N. B., was the Monday date, this being one of the banner stands in Canada. Grand Falls, Woodstock, St. Andrews, and McAdams followed. A long run to Danforth, Maine, for August 17, then a Sunday run of 238 miles to Cookshire, Quebec, and next day at Farnham, Quebec.

This concluded the tour of the Mighty Haag Circus lasting from June 3 to August 20, sixty-six stands in all. The show received a hearty welcome and satisfactory business during the stay on Canadian soil. The first stop back in the States was Rouses Point, N. Y. All with the show that year including the writer, enjoyed the trip through Canada and the many interesting experiences. After playing a few towns in New York state the circus worked South through Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, and closed a long season December 2 at Vivian, Louisiana. Winter quarters at Shreveport, Louisiana.

\* \* \*

As the railroad crew were preparing to shift the flats and stock cars, all loaded, to couple on to the sleepers at St. Catharines, Ont., to leave town, an explosive of some kind was set off on top of the elephant car. The noise awakened everyone on the show train, some who had already retired. A crowd of townspeople came in haste to the railroad yards. Rudy Gonzallas, in charge of the elephants, immediately appeared and got them out of the car amid their excitement and trumpeting. Their injuries, cuts about the back and heads from splintered wood, were carefully attended at once. Nine camels in the other half of the same car were in no way injured. The show train was held for some time while police and railroad officials made every effort to find the ones responsible for the outrage but without success. Some people with the show, I remember, blamed this on another rival circus in Canada at the time, but nothing could ever be proven. The next day the car was repaired and the elephants shortly recovered from their injuries which were not serious. Two of these, "Tip" and "Alice" continued on with the show as long as it was on the road.

\* \* \*

The General Agent of the show sent a consignment of advertising paper on the show to Fredericton, N. B., Canada, early in the season. For customs purposes the General Agent declared the paper to be rags. After the customary lapse of 30 days the paper had not been claimed, so the bundles were put on the auction block by the customs authorities. The Agent maneuvered it so that a couple of his advance men reported on the auction scene to put in bids on the alleged rags. They say that not more than \$2 was the winning bid—and the advance boys were the victorious bidders. In that way they



## A Tour of Canada (cont'd)

evaded imposition of heavy duty. The next day the town was heavily plastered with Haag paper. The newspapers called it a dirty trick or words to that effect. They even say that the press went so far as to term it a blasted Yankee machination. A trick of the circus.

\* \* \*

Lovers of the tasty brown bean will be interested to learn that the grand old circus man Ernest Haag, had his own brand of fine coffee shipped on to the show regularly from Shreveport, La. It was called "Haag's Circus Blend." Readers of the Bandwagon may be interested to know that the colored chef with King Bros. Circus this year, Napoleon Reed, held the same position years ago with the Mighty Haag Show.

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Mrs. Harriett Beatty, wife of Clyde Beatty, owner of Clyde Beatty Circus, died October 25th of a heart ailment. Mrs. Beatty joined Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus in 1930 and married Clyde Beatty in 1933 . . . Cole Bros. Circus will make permanent winter quarters at Peru, Ind., and will construct new buildings on the Terrell Jacobs Farm . . . Dailey Bros. Circus, it is reported, will sell their railroad cars to a scrap company . . . Ringling Bros. & Barnum & Bailey Circus will limit their circus train to 60 cars in 1951 . . . Boost in rail tariff may curtail rail shows in 1951 . . . Mills Bros. Circus will winter at State Fairgrounds in Columbus, Ohio . . . Clyde Beatty Circus will winter at Shreveport, La., this rail circus wintered here in 1949 . . . Selles Bros. Circus, owned by Al Jones is wintering at Eaton, Ohio . . . Al G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Circus and Biller Bros. Circus had a paper war in Louisiana . . . THE BILLBOARD has its face lifted, the new and better BILLBOARD made its first appearance this month.

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Division I, of the Circus Historical Society, held their fall meeting October 28th at Coldwater, Mich. John Walker, Coldwater member, was host and exhibited his fine collection of circus photos and route books going back as far as Barnum & Bailey of 1886 . . . a prize is his elephant shape Barnum and Bailey route book of 1897. Mr. Walker gave members a "star back" from the Forepaugh-Sells Circus as a souvenir. Following grace by Mrs. Clyde Wixom, a delightful banquet was served in the Arlington Hotel to Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Wixom, Mr. and Mrs. Chalmer Condon and daughter, Dorcas, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Conover, Albert Conover, Sally Conover, Jackie Conover, Mr. and Mrs. John Walker, Johny Vogelsang, Clarence Shank, Robert C. King, Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Chapman, Mr. and Mrs. Glen Townsend and Harry M. Simpson.



The book, *CARBINE & LANCE*, which is a history of Fort Sill, Oklahoma, contains a photo of William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill). In *MY PEOPLE THE SIOUX*, by Chief Standing Bear, there's a chapter "With Buffalo Bill in England" with a couple of photos taken in the arena of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

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### **IDA RINGLING NORTH**

Ida Ringling North, 76, who shared with her sons John R. North and Henry R. North, the administration of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus, passed away on December 21. With her son John R. North she administered the vast Ringling Estate in Florida. Ida R. North was born in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, and was the only sister of the seven Ringling brothers, of circus fame, the last of whom, John, died in 1936.

In addition to her sons, she is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Randolph Wadsworth, Ft. Thomas, Ky. Interment will be in the family mausoleum, where John Ringling and his wife Mabel, also will rest.

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### **WALTER L. MAIN**

Walter L. Main, at one time one of the biggest names in the circus business, died on Wednesday, November 29, at the age of 88. Everyone in CHS has at one time or another known Walter Main, and we all found him to be a prince of a fellow—always ready to tell tales of his experience while in the circus business. All will miss him, and the CHS extends sympathy to his niece and other survivors. Flowers were sent from CHS.

### **WILLIAM F. WEST**

William F. West of Peru, Ind., passed away on December 11, in Dukes Hospital. He was the husband of Mrs. W. F. West, whom all CHS members know quite well. We will none of us forget him, as we remember the fine host he was when we went to Peru, and visited the Miami County Historical Museum, nor shall we forget the Sunday morning he came down and showed us through the Museum. Those members who attended the Convention in Baraboo in 1949, will remember him especially well, as he and Mrs. West were always in the midst of all our activities, and he was a fine entertainer as we made the trip through the Wisconsin Dells on Sunday. The sympathy of all CHS members goes to Mrs. West in her loss.

Funeral services were held on December 13, with burial in Mt. Hope Cemetery in Peru.

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### **MARGE CHIPMAN**

Mrs. Marge Chipman, wife of Harry B. Chipman, member of CHS and CFA and owner of Circus Inn, Yakima, Wash., passed away October 31st in Seattle, Wash. Burial in Showman's Rest, Los Angeles. The Circus Historical Society extend their deepest sympathy.



# The One Ring Circus

By Sid Baker, Australia

Over the years we have heard a lot of Americas three ring circuses. Many of these advertise three rings and two stages and, according to eye witnesses and printed programs, these shows have as many as four acts working at the same time in various parts of the tent.

Now it is impossible for any patron to witness more than one act at a time, so after all, the great big three ring shows of America fine down to only a one ring show to one pair of eyes.

It would be ridiculous for instance to have more than one stage in a theatre presenting different shows simultaneously. What a mix up would result, or two screens with two different pictures.

Yes, that is what a three ring circus amounts to, so I think we in Australia are fortunate in having just the one ring show.

With us, the whole set up is intimate and the patrons can concentrate with pleasure on the spectacle before them, which, I would say, gives the performers more interest and incentive in their work. They realise that all eyes are on them alone and in Australia those eyes are critical indeed.

It is to be hoped therefore that Australia circus proprietors will never become ambitious enough to want the three ring circus as America knows it.

We enjoy our one ring show, who could ask for more?



## 1950 ROUTE BOOK

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FRED W. STAFFORD, Jr.

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# Mississippi Disaster Brings Tragic End To Early Circus

By John C. Kunzog

One of the most tragic chapters of circus history is the burning of the steamer *Golden City*, just off Memphis, Tenn., on the morning of March 30, 1882, writing in letters of fire "Finis" to the W. H. Stowe Circus. Thirty-five persons lost their lives in this terrible Mississippi River disaster.

The steamer *Golden City* of the Southern Transportation Company's lines, plying between Cincinnati and New Orleans, had sailed from the latter port on Saturday, March 25, 1882, with a crew of 60 and 40 cabin passengers. Her cargo consisted of 800 tons, among which was a lot of jute stored in the center of the steamer.

At Vidalia, La., Stowe's Circus was taken aboard, the equipment comprising six cages of animals and birds, the ticket and band wagons, tents and other paraphernalia.

It was 4:30 in the morning of Thursday, March 30, 1882, as the steamer was headed for the Anchor Line wharf in Memphis, Tenn., that Second Engineer Robert Kelly discovered fire amidship and immediately notified Capt. Brice Purcel, Sr., the pilot on the watch.

The boat was immediately headed for the nearest dock and four minutes later touched the wharf at the foot of Beale Street, where a coal fleet was moored. A line was hastily thrown and made fast to one of the coal barges. Before other lines could be thrown and secured, the swift current caused the first hawser to snap and the *Golden City* floated down stream a mass of flames that reached skyward and lighted up the river and shore. Thirty minutes later the ship sank in deep water below head of President's Island three miles from Memphis and about 200 yards from the Tennessee shore.

When the line parted and the steamer started to float away from the wharf, about 20 persons leaped aboard a barge which had broken anchorage from the impact received when the *Golden City* pulled alongside the coal fleet. The barge floated down stream with its passengers but was rescued by one of the harbor boats. Other passengers and crew members had managed to jump to safety when the steamer first touched the coal fleet. Passengers that were saved lost all their clothing, for when the alarm was sounded the fire was gaining such headway that they had to flee for their lives without taking time to save personal effects.

Fire is believed to have started when the Negro captain of the watch, named Wash, was rounding up his deck crew as they were nearing Memphis. He had a lamp in his hand and had searched for some of his men in the pile of jute, a highly combustible material. It is believed that a spark from the lamp ignited the jute, but went unnoticed until discovered by Second Engineer Kelly, when the flames had already gained such headway that the fire could not be controlled.

The cage containing the lion sank in the middle of the stream as the flames enveloped it; other menagerie stock lost included an Albino deer, a cage of birds, a cage of monkeys, two leopards, a



## Mississippi Disaster (cont'd)

mule, three pad-horses and six work horses. The celebrated trick horse "Selim" was lost. There was heard no cry from a single beast as the animals burned to death.

A buffalo, a bear and three pad horses leaped overboard and swam ashore.

Among the circus folk who lost their lives were W. H. Stowe and wife (Lizzie Marcellus), their two children, Birdie and Willie; and J. H. Conck, proprietor of the sideshow.

Among those saved were Frank Stowe, cousin of the proprietor, press agent; Burt Stowe, a brother of W. H. Stowe, equestrian director; John H. Trewalla, general agent; Robert E. Ellbrick, treasurer; John Filbert, master of transportation; James Swift, master of horses; Prof. H. N. Ackerman, performing broncho horses and trained dogs; John Melain; Mrs. Stowe's grooms, Shorty and Ned; John G. Glenroy, animal keeper. The latter is probably the only person who escaped fully clothed. He was asleep under one of the animal cages and as the boat touched the coal fleet he jumped ashore.

The bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Stowe were not readily found, the body of Mrs. Stowe not being recovered until April 9 and that of Mr. Stowe on April 11. The body of Birdie, the daughter, was found 47 miles below Memphis, at Lamb's Landing, on April 13th.

It was planned to exhibit at the Exposition Building in Memphis the three horses, the bear and the buffalo that so heroically escaped from the flaming steamer and swam to shore, the proceeds to go for the relief of the survivors of the disaster, many of whom were destitute, but this plan had to be abandoned when B. F. Tatum obtained an attachment on the show property for unpaid services rendered the late W. H. Stowe some time previous while showing in the southern states.

William H. Stowe was born in 1853 in Ottokee, Ohio, and was trained as a performer from early childhood, his father, John Stowe, being a well known circus manager of the period. In 1868 he was with his father's circus; in 1870 and 1871 with John Stowe and Miles Orton's Show; in 1872 he became a partner in John Stowe & Son's Southern Circus; in 1873 he traveled as clown with Stowe, Robbins & Co. Show; the following season he was with Sam Cole's Dominion Circus as clown and leaper; in 1875 he was connected with Sadler's English Circus of which his father was assistant manager, and in 1876 with Cook's English and American Circus.

In 1877 Mr. Stowe joined P. T. Barnum's Show for two seasons, and then went to the West Indies with John H. Murray's Circus, and subsequently played with the Orrin Brothers in Havana, Cuba. On his return to the states he started out with the New Orleans Circus, which failed and was sold at auction. Mr. Stowe bought it and associated Dan Rice with himself in the management. This arrangement was not satisfactory and Mr. Rice withdrew. Then, as Stowe's Circus, he gave his first performance at New Orleans, La., February 20, 1881, and after a stand of three weeks the show made a tour of the South on rails. The show played Richmond, Va., May 8, where it took to wagons and continued the tour until it reached Mobile, Ala., where a steamer was chartered and exhibitions were given in the towns on the banks of the Southern rivers.



## Mississippi Disaster (cont'd)

The river boat method of transportation proved quite profitable and it was with high expectations that Mr. Stowe loaded his show on the steamer *Golden City*, planning to open the 1882 season at Cairo, Illinois.

Mrs. Stowe was professionally known as Lizzie Marcellus. She was born near Schenectady, N.Y., where her father had a farm. She early showed ability to manage horses and was a good rider. About 1866 she was apprenticed to Dan Rice and under his tutelage she developed into a skillful equestrienne.

A portable theatre which had been built in this country and shipped to Paris, France, to be used by an American circus company during the Exposition, but which the French authorities would not allow to be erected in the city limits, was returned to New York and erected on Fourteenth Street, between Second and Third Avenues.. This building was used for the first time on Monday, September 25, 1871, when Dan Rice's Paris Pavilion Circus showed there.

It was on this opening date that Lizzie Marcellus made her New York City debut, winning the plaudits of the multitude by her dashing and daring riding and her graceful style.

In 1873 she married an Italian circus performer named Cardona. The union proved unhappy and she obtained a divorce in Chicago two years later. A son, Willie, was born to this union.

In 1877 she married Mr. Stowe and joined with P. T. Barnum and continued with him for two seasons, following which she performed with her husband. Birdie was a daughter born of her second marriage.

Mrs. Stowe was conceded to be the best dressed woman that ever graced an arena, while her ability as an equestrienne won for her top billing with Barnum's in 1879 when she was included in the program of "Six Lady Riders."

### Greetings

R I N G L I N G

MUSEUM  
OF THE  
AMERICAN  
CIRCUS

SARASOTA, FLA.

John L. Sullivan

Curator, C.H.S. 437

### Season's

*Greetings*

from

THE SIMPSONS

HARRY — EUNICE — MICHAEL

CAMDEN, OHIO



Copy of a handbill on display in the Cabildo, New Orleans:

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Leader of brass band, Mr. J. Eckert
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Led by Mesdames Ormond, Siegrist and Costello
3. HORSEMANSHIP—Nautical -----R. Nathaniels
4. PEDESTRIANISM—Tall walking-----Mr. T. Lenton
5. AERIAL SUSPENSIONS—Unsupported ladders-----Messer. R. Libbey,  
Signor Villanueva, Richardson and Walters
6. HORSEMANSHIP-----Mr. Rogers' favorite pupil, Little Kate Ormond,  
Maitre M. Rogers, Clown Costello
7. EQUILIBRIA—La Globe sur le Perche-----Libby and O. Richardson
8. GYMNASTICS—Comique -----Mons. F. Siegrist and Mr. T. Lenton
9. HORSEMANSHIP—Somersetts and Pirouettes on a Bare Back Horse  
-----Mr. Rogers' Pupil, Young Frank Barry, Master  
Libby, Clown Thayer

Intermission, 10 minutes

#### Part II

10. GYMNASTICS AND TUMBLING-----Company
11. QUADRUPEDAL SPORTS -----Trick Horse
12. GYMNASTICS, LE TREPAZO DE DEUX-----Sig. Villanueva and  
Mr. C. Walters
13. HORSEMANSHIP—Double Hurdle Leaping-----Mr. O. Richardson,  
Maitre Libby, Clown Costello
14. HERCULEAN—Cannon ball sports-----H. Libby
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Div. 10—South America and England—E.  
Titus.

## JAMES LIVINGSTON

Death claimed honorary mem-  
ber James Livingston, 84, of  
Jamestown, N. Y., Monday, Oct-  
ober 30th. Mr. Livingston was  
formerly connected with many  
circuses which included the Adam  
Forepaugh Circus when he was  
billed as "America's Greatest  
Contortionist." He at one time  
operated the James Daniels  
Shows. He will be greatly mis-  
sed by all that knew him.

THE INDEX OF AMERICAN  
DESIGN, just published, contains  
a chapter called "Circuses and  
Carrousels" which has informa-  
tion on circus wagon builders,  
wood carvers and designers. Il-  
lustrations include a color plate  
of the "Golden Age of Chivalry"  
wagon designed by George Law-  
rence and the Sebastian Wagon  
Company, 1887-1889.

### MINSTREL SHOW PHOTOS

SEND FOR LIST

A. H. GILGER

576 S. Roys Ave., Columbus, Ohio

### MERRY CHRISTMAS AND PRAYERFUL SOLICITATIONS TO A BAND OF PEOPLE, C.H.S.

On the Bright Side of Dark Clouds,  
Whose Wealth of Good Will Is Golden as Chariots,  
Whose Hearts Beat to the "Gobble of the Calliope,"  
And whose Hope Glows like the Red Wagons!"

ARTHUR V. ISENBERG, Chaplain. No. 455



# Greeting From President . . .

The same old Wish, the same old way, but its meaning deepens every year, Christmas time means happiness, and that is what I wish for all the members of "The Circus Historical Society" and all the Joy that a new year can hold.

Your President,

BETTE LEONARD

"Off-Hand Takings; or, Crayon Sketches of the Noticeable Men of Our Age" is title of a 408-page book, by George W. Bungay, published in 1854. Among the biographical sketches of the 75 then-prominent men is one on P. T. Barnum, "the chief caterer for the amusements of the million, the prince of showmen, the curiosity king," etc. This was when Barnum was 43 years old and proprietor of the American Museum. The six-page sketch is accompanied by a steel engraving of Barnum that may be rare. Anyway it shows Barnum as a much younger man than do most of the Barnum pictures.

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WE FELL IN LOVE WITH THE CIRCUS. Num. illus. 5.00  
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of the art exhibit of the Wisconsin  
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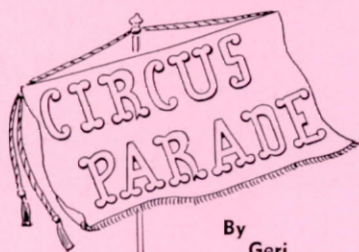
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While Circus rides by!

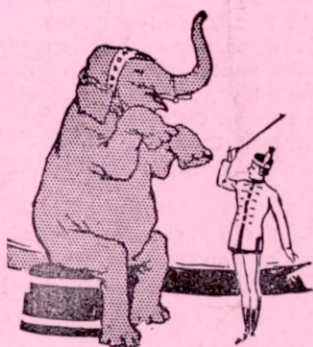
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